

Pembroke Center

for TEACHING AND RESEARCH ON WOMEN

Visions of Nature: Constructing the Cultural Other

Leslie Bostrom, Associate Professor of Art, will lead the 2008-09 Pembroke Seminar.

Western cultures have an uneasy and contradictory relationship with the natural world, humans being of it as animals yet simultaneously observing, consuming, and attempting to control it. Through the visual arts and popular media, through literature, philosophy, aesthetics, and science, through landscaping and architecture, humans represent their relationships with nature. Nature can be a kind of dark mirror, reflecting back one's desires and fears, loaded with contradictions and colonial yearnings. It is thought to be fragile yet indestructible, finite yet cyclical, dangerous yet restful. Notions of the natural are employed to build theories of the human, as in human nature, natural law, natural gifts, natural intelligence. On the one hand, there is something essentially natural about humans, some sort of authentic animal core; on the other, there are fantasies of the wild, as if there were a territory of pure nature excluding the human predator. The Western ethical relationship to nature is similarly ambivalent: on one hand, nature is pure and uncorrupted by human desire; on the other, nature is by definition the location of sin, the refusal or inability to recognize divine intervention and moral authority—the “Noble Savage” vs. “Lord of the Flies.” The 2008-09 Pembroke Seminar will look at how such ambivalences toward nature have driven Western cultural aspirations—political and economic—as well as cultural notions of the self, of ethics, of aesthetics, of sexuality and the body. And by studying formations that emerge from other cultural representations of nature, the seminar will examine some of the above assumptions about what is particularly “Western” about Western nature. For more information, please visit our website at www.pembrokecenter.org.

Gender and the Politics of “Traditional” Muslim Practices Conference

March 7, 2008



(L-R): Sherine Hamdy of Brown University, Lila Abu-Lughod of Columbia University, Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf of Qatar University, and Dicle Kogacioglu of Sabanci University, Istanbul.

In cases where Muslim women and girls are seen as needing to be rescued and advocacy seems imperative—as with honor crimes, female circumcision, and early marriage—structural analyses of issues apart from gender can fall away, thus producing little new knowledge and reinforcing stereotypes of Muslim backwardness versus Western modernity. Leading scholars came to Brown in March to discuss alternative ways to view

so-called “traditional” Muslim practices. They examined instances where everything from local politics to transnational economics might contribute to a given practice, and where the political, the socio-economic, or the cultural might be the most important factors to consider. Plans for the ongoing project include publication of the March conference and continued conversations at other institutions.

Please see page 4 for more information.

Pembroke Seminar: The Question of Identity in Psychoanalysis

Bernard Reginster, Professor of Philosophy and the Chesler-Mallow Senior Faculty Research Fellow at the Pembroke Center, is the director of the 2007-08 Pembroke Seminar. This year's seminar has as its theme "The Question of Identity in Psychoanalysis." In the century since Sigmund Freud's early psychoanalytic works, the discipline has witnessed a theoretical explosion of ideas. These new ideas have produced a rich and sometimes

confusing fabric of effects on academic disciplines such as philosophy, religious studies, history, gender studies, literature, media studies, and anthropology. The seminar looks at how psychoanalytic views of identity continue to evolve and what impact these theories have on scholarship in a variety of fields.

For a full seminar description, please see:
www.pembrokecenter.org.



Elisabeth Anker

Carol G. Lederer Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. in Political Theory,
University of California, Berkeley, 2007

Project: "Orgies of Feeling: Melodramatic Identifications and the Post-9/11 Political Subject"

Anker's research focuses on post-9/11 political life, drawing from Freud's insights into identification to help understand how American citizens identify with violent state action as a form of individual heroism. Looking in particular at the role of melodrama in American political discourse, Anker asks how, whether, and to what degree Freud's varied analyses of the human psyche can be used to examine the workings of contemporary political phenomena. Anker understands melodrama to incorporate identifications with figures of both victimization and heroism and explores tensions and problems that this dual identification engenders within contemporary American political subjectivity.



Lara Kelingos

Nancy L. Buc Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. in German Studies,
Cornell University, 2007

Project: "The Melancholic Subject in Relation: Subjectivation, Attachment, and Resistance"

This project examines the politics of remembrance and inheritance in post-war Germany, with a particular focus on the intersection of political and psychoanalytic accounts of subjectivity. Kelingos examines several German novelists whose works draw from their experiences as children in Nazi Germany. Looking at these writings through the lens of the psychoanalytic concept of melancholia and situating them in their particular historical context, she is able to shed light on the legacies of a criminal national inheritance for citizens of post-war and post-reunification Germany.



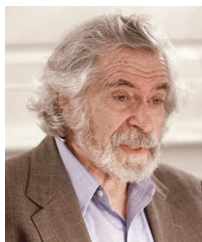
Elana Weiner

Artemis A.W. and Martha Joukowsky Postdoctoral Fellow
Ph.D. in Psychology, Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, 1995

Project: "The Negotiation of Envy and the Development of the Self"

Weiner's research examines the intersubjective negotiation of envy, with mutual experiences of giving and receiving, as central to the development of the self. Challenging traditional formulations of envy as a destructive force, Weiner examines the ways in which, under optimal conditions, envy operates as an impetus for development. Her work explores the child's emergent capacities to apprehend and create certain kinds of affective states and thereby to regulate the sense of self. Weiner is a practicing psychologist and provides psychoanalytically oriented therapy to adults.

2007-08 Pembroke Center Lectures



Arnold H. Modell
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry
Harvard Medical School

“Identity and the Selection of Value”

October 9, 2007



Judith Guss Teicholz
Supervising Analyst and Faculty Member
Massachusetts Institute for Psychoanalysis

“A Strange Convergence: Postmodern Theory, Infant Research, and Psychoanalysis”

December 4, 2007



John Forrester
Professor of History and Philosophy of Science
University of Cambridge

“Women and the Reception of Psychoanalysis in Cambridge in the Early Twentieth Century”

April 3, 2008

Faculty Fellows

Bernard Reginster
PHILOSOPHY
Chesler-Mallow Senior Faculty
Research Fellow

Omer Bartov
HISTORY
Edwin and Shirley Seave
Faculty Fellow

Coppélia Kahn
ENGLISH
Edith Goldthwaite Miller
Faculty Fellow

Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg
ITALIAN STUDIES AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
Pembroke Center
Faculty Fellow

Graduate Fellows

David Bering-Porter
MODERN CULTURE AND MEDIA

Erin Roberts
RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Carlos Vazquez
AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

Undergraduate Fellows

Jessica Laser
RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Alexandra Regenbogen
PSYCHOLOGY



Graduate Fellows David Bering-Porter, Erin Roberts, and Carlos Vazquez

Gender and the Politics of “Traditional” Muslim Practices

Conference Presenters



Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian of Hebrew University and Sherine Hamdy of Brown University

Leti Volpp

Law
University of California, Berkeley
Opening Remarks

Dicle Kogacioglu

Sociology
Sabanci University, Turkey
“Gender in Tradition: A Kaleidoscope of Colonialisms?”

Lila Abu-Lughod

Anthropology
Columbia University
“The Scandal of Honor Crimes: Liberalism and the Circulation of Rights Discourses”

Sherene Razack

Sociology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Canada
“Multiculturalism vs. Feminism, Round Two: Feminist Responses to Violence against Muslim Women”

Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian

Faculty of Law
Hebrew University, Israel
“‘Security Theology,’ Global Economy of Fear and Violence against Women in Conflict Zones: The Palestinian Case Study”

Rogaia Abusharaf

Anthropology
Qatar University, Qatar
“Transforming the Gendered Self in Northern Sudan”

Annie Bunting

Law and Society
York University, Canada
“An Analysis of ‘Promoting Muslim Women’s Rights through Sharia in Northern Nigeria’: A Development Strategy?”

Arzoo Osanloo

Law, Societies & Justice Program
University of Washington, Seattle
“When Blood Has Been Spilled: Unraveling the Gendered Logistics of Islamic Criminal Sanctioning in Iran”

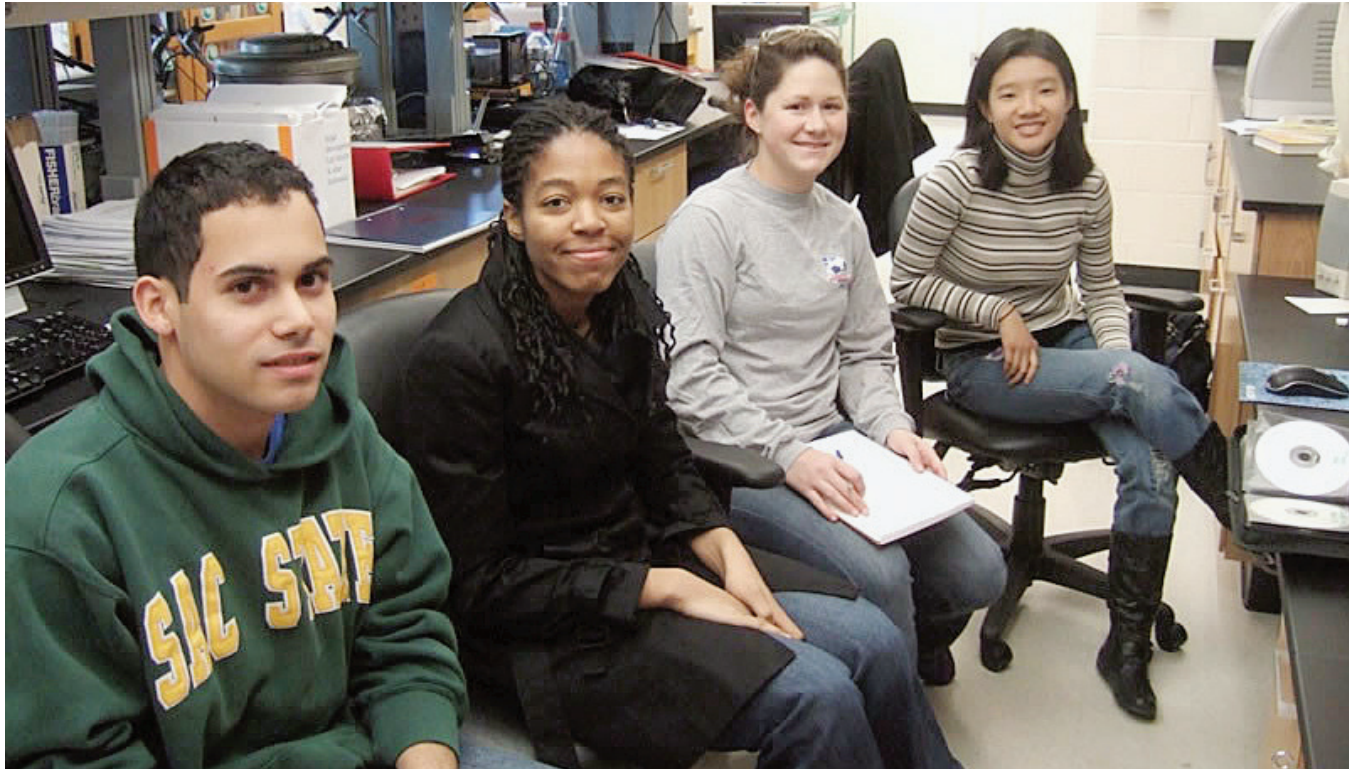
Elliot Colla, Middle East Studies, Brown University, and Sherine Hamdy, Anthropology, Brown University served as moderators for the conference.

The conference was sponsored by the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women. Institutional cosponsors included: Middle East Studies, Cogut Center for the Humanities, Watson Institute for International Relations, Anthropology, and the Sarah Doyle Women’s Center.



Sherene Razack of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Ford Foundation Awards \$200,000 to Child Development Research Initiative



(L-R) Ray Serrano'07, MD'11, Christelle Ngnoumen'09, Alison Toth'08, and Mary Zeng'09 code data and perform statistical analysis for the Child Development Project. Ngnoumen also works as laboratory coordinator for the project.

Charley Chen

The Child Development research initiative, directed by Anne Fausto-Sterling, Professor of Biology and Gender Studies, applies a dynamic systems approach to questions of human development. The initiative's research suggests that complex sex-typed behaviors come into being through a process of dynamic interactions between children and their environment—a function of both biological and social influences. The Ford Foundation, which made its initial grant in 2004, recently extended its support with a \$200,000 award to further the project's research through 2010.

This interdisciplinary research initiative began with the 2002-03 Pembroke Seminar, "Theories of Embodiment." Following the seminar, Fausto-Sterling undertook the beginning stages of the project in collaboration with a faculty fellow of the "Embodiment" seminar, Cynthia García Coll, Professor of Education, Psychology, and Pediatrics. Fausto-Sterling and García Coll have been joined in their research by Ronald Seifer, Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior and Director of the Center for the Study of Human Development, and by William H. Warren, Jr., Professor of Cognitive & Linguistic Sciences and chair of the department. The initiative has received seed funding for several years from the Pembroke Center. Additional support has come from the Wayland Collegium and the Office of the Vice President for Research.

At present, researchers are conducting detailed analyses of four infants (two boys and two girls) and their mothers in weekly videotaped sessions from ages two to fourteen months. Through these analyses, researchers are obtaining a rich description of the development of activity level, vocalization, and play behavior, three behaviors for which sex-typed differences have previously been reported in the first three years of life. Parental behavior is also being observed and coded.

When the data analyses are complete, researchers hope to test hypotheses and identify how stable patterns emerge that point to differences between the genders.

The new Ford Foundation support will enable researchers to extend their sample of four infant-mother pairs to a sample of thirty infant-mother pairs, thus allowing analyses that combine the depth and detail of dynamic systems case studies with the predictive power of multivariate statistical analysis. In doing so, researchers hope to translate their dynamic systems model of sex-typed differences into the language of mainstream developmental science.

To learn more about the Child Development research initiative, please visit:

www.brown.edu/Research/Behaviors_in_Infancy
(URL is case-sensitive)

Forthcoming Book: *Women's Studies on the Edge*



Joan Wallach Scott was the founding director of the Pembroke Center and is the Harold F. Linder Professor, School of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study.

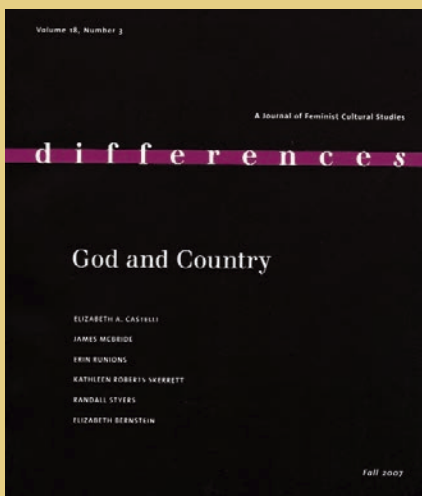
A third book in the *differences* series is due to appear this spring with Duke University Press. *Women's Studies on the Edge*, edited by Joan Wallach Scott,

comes at a time when women's studies programs have achieved department status in many universities, establishing tenure-track appointments, graduate programs, and consistent course enrollments. Yet, as Scott notes in her introduction, women's studies has lost much of its critical purchase. Feminism, the driving political force behind women's studies, is regarded by many of today's students as an outmoded political position, and activism is no longer central to women's studies programs on many campuses. In *Women's Studies on the Edge*, leading feminist scholars tackle the critical, political, and institutional challenges that women's studies has faced since its widespread integration into university curricula.

The contributors embrace feminism not as a set of prescriptions, but as a critical stance, one that seeks to interrogate and

disrupt prevailing systems of gender. Refusing to perpetuate and protect orthodoxies, they ask tough questions about the impact of institutionalization on the once radical field of women's studies; about the ongoing difficulties of articulating women's studies with ethnic, queer, and race studies; and about the limits of liberal concepts of emancipation for understanding non-Western women. They also question the viability of continuing to ground women's studies in identity politics authorized by personal experience. In *Women's Studies on the Edge*, there are conflicting interpretations that sometimes overlap and sometimes stand in opposition to one another. The result is a collection that embodies the best aspects of critique: the intellectual and political stance that the contributors take to be feminism's ethos and its aim.

differences Guest Editor and Contributors to Present at Cultural Studies Association Meeting



On behalf of *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Elizabeth Castelli, Professor of Religion at Barnard College at Columbia University, will lead a discussion on the intellectual underpinnings of conservative Christian activism in contemporary U.S. culture at the Sixth Annual Cultural Studies Association meeting. The meeting, which will be held in May at New York University, provides a forum for scholars of Cultural Studies, in all its diverse manifestations, to exchange their work and ideas across disciplinary lines and institutional locations. Castelli has assembled a panel comprised of the contributors to *God and Country*, the special issue of the journal that she guest edited (*differences* 18.3).

The panel will discuss the judicial history of secularism, explore a series of examples where law and religion overlap in complex and sometimes paradoxical ways, and examine the rhetorical strategies underpinning various sites of Christian activism. Progressive thinkers have increasingly raised the specter of "theocracy" in analyzing the current state of affairs in U.S. politics; *God and Country* offers readers a series of case studies for critically assessing such claims.



Nancy Armstrong

Annual Gender Studies Lecture

Nancy Duke
Lewis Professor
and Professor
of English,
Comparative
Literature, and
Modern Culture
and Media

“Gender Must Be Defended”

October 23, 2007

Victorian novelists were the first to confront the problem of the relationship between themselves as individuals and what Foucault calls “man-as-species.” This is a problem for theorists of liberal democracy as well. In two series of lec-

tures titled, respectively, *Society Must Be Defended* (1976-77) and *Security, Territory, Population* (1977-78), Foucault offers his most comprehensive explanation as to why the disciplinary procedures aimed at producing self-governing individuals required supplementary policies that dealt with the population at large and so give rise to what he calls bio-power. Even here, however, he stops short of acknowledging the difficulty of articulating the subject presupposed by liberal society to the object of bio-power. Armstrong discussed a number of Victorian novels to see how they negotiated the contradiction posed by the two modes of government and concluded that a more flexible concept of gender can show how the Victorians themselves imagined an alternative to a society composed of individuals.

Helen Terry MacLeod Research Grant Recipient: Elisabeth Stelson



Elisabeth Stelson '08

The Pembroke Center awards the Helen Terry MacLeod Research Grant to support undergraduate honors research on issues having to do with women or gender, or research that

brings a feminist analysis to bear on a problem or set of questions. Elisabeth Stelson, a senior concentrating in History, is the recipient of this year's MacLeod grant to support her research exploring the history of women's anti-suffrage activity in Illinois.

The national anti-suffragist movement is considered to be a precursor of the conservative women's movement in the United

States. While the anti-suffragist movement of the Northeast has been studied, historians had largely ignored the movement in Illinois, and particularly in Chicago. In identifying this research gap and developing a case study of the anti-suffrage movement in Illinois, Stelson's honors thesis explores the dialogue between anti-suffragists and suffragists and examines how capitalists, immigrants, and organized labor responded to and influenced the debate about women's suffrage.

The MacLeod grant enabled Stelson to travel to numerous locations vital to her research, including Harvard's Schlesinger Library's Women's Rights Collection, the Chicago History Museum, the Newberry Library in Chicago, the Illinois State Historical Society, and Cornell University's Women's Studies Collection located at the Carl A. Kroch Library.

Barbara Anton Intern: Alison Fairbrother



Alison Fairbrother '08

The Pembroke Center Associates, the Center's alumnae/i support organization, awards an annual internship to an undergraduate student whose honors project involves an internship or volunteer work in a community agency. This

year, the Associates awarded the internship grant to Alison Fairbrother, a Development Studies concentrator, who is interning for the African Services Committee (ASC). This community organization, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, provides HIV prevention education, mass condom distribution, counseling and testing for HIV, and care and support for HIV positive individuals.

Fairbrother's internship with ASC has involved writing grants and overseeing a pilot program she helped develop to improve the health of fifteen HIV positive mothers and their children living in an impoverished area on an isolated mountaintop above Addis Ababa. In addition to providing medical care and nutrition, Fairbrother's project helps arrange no-interest loans for the mothers to start businesses to generate income for their families. An important element of this project is its respect for the families' belief in the healing properties of holy water from a stream at the top of their mountain.

Utilizing the findings from her internship in Ethiopia, Fairbrother is writing an honors thesis that investigates the ways Western medicine can be combined with a strong local commitment to religiously-inspired medicinal beliefs, such as holy water. Her research asks how the incorporation of traditional practices can have an impact on the success or failure of programs that introduce Western medicine.

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